



For immediate release  
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## **Santa Clara County Public Health Department Identifies Suspect Case of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)**

SAN JOSE, CA – Santa Clara County Public Health Department officials have identified one suspect case of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), an atypical respiratory illness recently reported in persons in several nations in Southeast Asia. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have notified the California Department of Health Services of another suspect case in Colorado involving a resident of Santa Clara County, California.

Specimens from the Santa Clara County case are being sent to the California Department of Health Services (DHS) for diagnostic testing. This individual is in fair condition.

Prior to identifying the suspect case, the Public Health Department sent a Health Alert to Santa Clara County physicians. The Health Alert, which includes clinical guidelines, provides information to increase awareness of SARS, enhance the ability to respond to any patient experiencing symptoms of this illness, and guide the reporting of any suspect case to local health officials. Clinical guidelines have also been sent to all Santa Clara County hospitals.

"Respiratory illnesses are very common," said Martin Fenstersheib, M.D., M.P.H., Health Officer for Santa Clara County. "While we want our medical community and residents of our county to be aware of SARS symptoms, the mere presence of respiratory symptoms should not be a cause for alarm. For that reason, travel history is a key component in identifying suspect cases of SARS."

To avoid confusion with other respiratory illnesses Dr. Fenstersheib emphasized that there are specific conditions that must be met to be considered SARS:

- Fever ( $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$  or  $100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ );
- AND one or more signs or symptoms of respiratory illness including:
  - Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or abnormal chest x-ray;
- AND one or more of the following:
  - **History of travel to Hong Kong; Guangdong Province in the People's Republic of China; Hanoi, Vietnam; or Singapore within seven days of symptom onset;**
  - **Close contact with persons with respiratory illness having the above travel history. Close contact includes having cared for, having lived with, or having had direct contact with respiratory secretions and body fluids of a person with SARS.**

Individuals who meet the conditions above should seek medical attention from their physician and inform their physician about their recent travel. Physicians should report any suspect case of SARS to Disease

Prevention & Control at 408-885-4214. Additional reporting information has been included in the clinical guidelines.

Currently, cases of possible SARS have been reported from those traveling to countries and cities in Southeast Asia, including Guangdong Province in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Hanoi, Vietnam. The CDC recommendations as of March 15 advise that individuals considering discretionary travel to these areas should take this fact into consideration in their plans.

For more information about SARS and travel updates, please see the CDC's and World Health Organization's Web sites at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and [www.who.int](http://www.who.int).

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